



Local Farmers Supporting Affordable Produce Purchases Through
CSA (Community Supported Agriculture), Produce Stands,
Mobile Farmers Markets and Home Delivered Produce

Healthy consumers, healthy local economy, healthy farm community!



Faith Communities Response to Food Insecurity





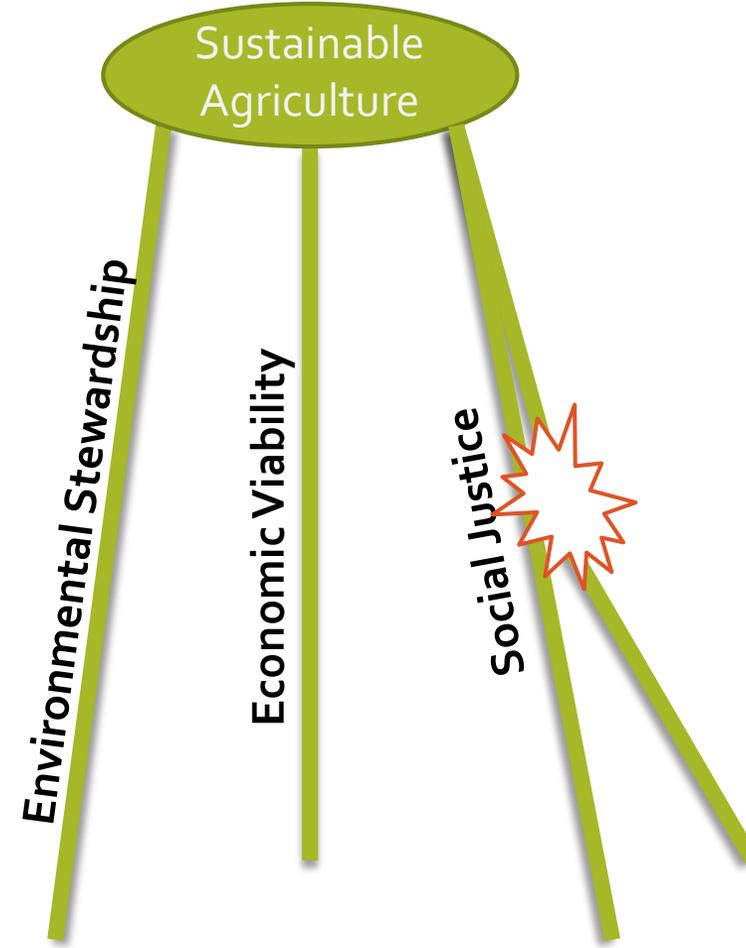
Interfaith Sustainable
Food Collaborative

Our Mission:

To advance the production of and access to healthy food produced in a sustainable, socially just manner by empowering faith communities with models and resources to impact local food systems and advance public policy.

Empowering faith communities to cultivate their faith values through:

- Supporting family farmers
- Increasing access to local, healthy food
- Advocating for sustainable food and farm policy



Rethinking Food Justice Hunger Relief

“The idea that if someone’s hungry, any food will do is outdated.”

Ruthi Solari -- A clinical nutritionist from San Diego ,Solari founded SuperFood Drive getting nutrient-dense foods into the hands of people who rely on food banks.

Making CSAs and Produce Stands a SNAP

- CSA drop sites at faith-based sites
 - Outreach, promotion, technical assistance
- Incentive for customers paying with CalFresh (1/2 of box price)
- SNAP purchases produce stands (max. flexibility)
- Culturally appropriate produce
- Serves all income levels



St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Healsburg



Incentive Program Model:

Healthful food purchasing that supports local farms while providing affordability for low-income people in partnership with community-based organizations.

- 1 to 1 match fruits & vegetable purchases for fruits & vegetable purchases
- All farmers are local California producers, most have been organic
- Sites serve 'members' and 'neighbors'; most serve a range of income levels (not just SNAP clients)
- No scrip for CSA purchases; produce stands use scrip or '50% discount'

Growing Edge: Home delivery of produce to homebound people

Moving Nutrition Incentives

Approx. \$100,000 committed nutrition incentive to move. Majority is CalFresh incentive.

Serving 27 sites.

- 9 CSA sites to date
- 4 Produce Stand sites to date
- 8 Mobile Farmers Market sites at faith-based 'campuses'
- 4 Farmers markets at faith-based 'campuses'
- 2 Health Clinic sites
- 6 Intermediary partners

Summary: Lots of independent partners moving \$3600 to \$5,000 each;

Average number of customers at CSA sites less than 10

Average purchase at produce stand and mobile market sites less than \$10 on CalFresh

Geography of Partnerships

- Focus on Sonoma, Marin, Alameda and Contra Costa counties
- Growing Edge:
Working with partners in:

Los Angeles, Fresno, Humboldt, Santa Cruz, Ventura

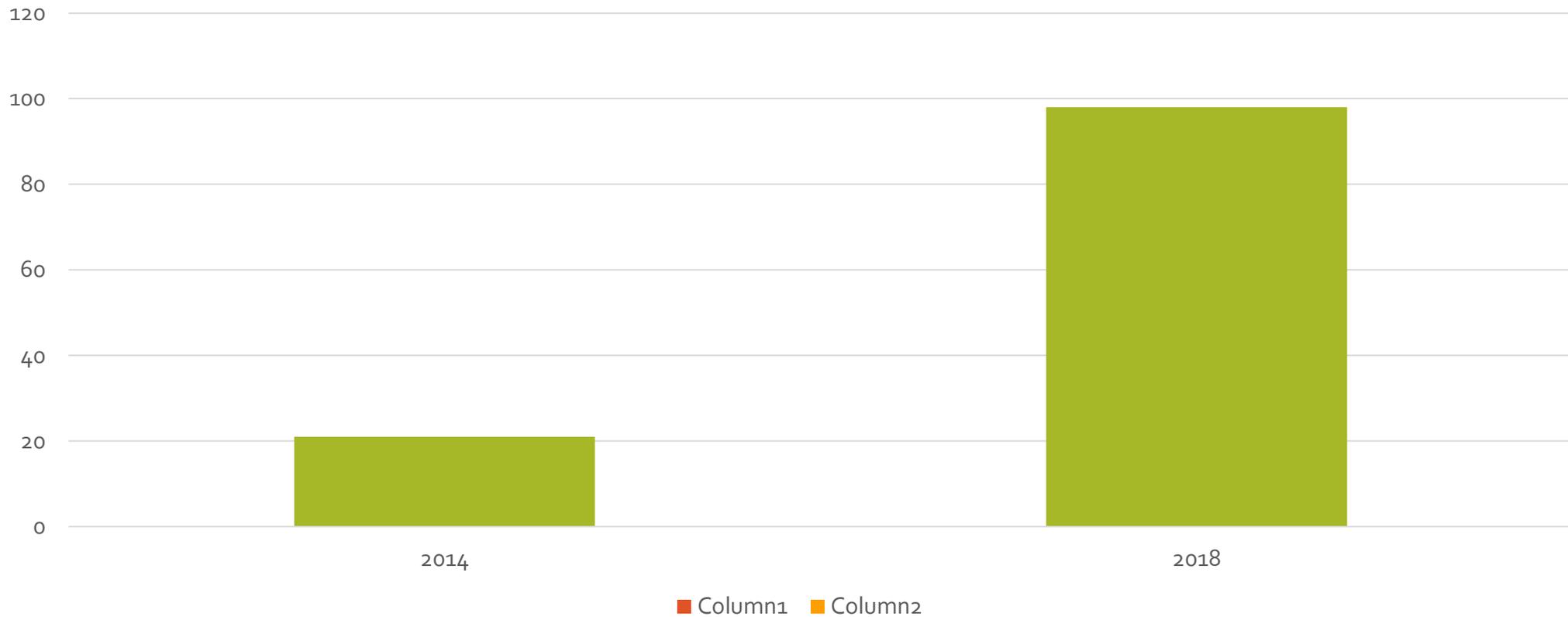
Challenges That We Knew We Would Face:

- Many partners don't have EBT machines at start.
- CSA farmers would deliver to multiple sites on their route and couldn't park and wait to accept SNAP during a redemption 'time window'
- In California direct market farmers receive 1 and only 1 free EBT machine
- Different sites and partners would reflect several redemption models
- Farmers would need to get their incentive very quickly after deliveries

Making CSA's and Produce Stands a SNAP Working with Partners

- Most farmers do not have time to wait for participants at a small CSA drop or off-site produce stand;
- Non-profit/congregational partner can operate the machine on farmer's behalf;
- Non-profit/faith-based partner also support marketing and outreach
- Limited resource partners can get 'advances' on incentive
(expensed after verification of SNAP purchases through "Batch-reports")

Growth in Number of California Direct Market Farmers Securing FNS Licenses



FNS License Types

Used by Our Partners

- “Direct Marketing Farmer”: farmer-producers that sell their own agricultural products directly to the general public, which includes fruit and vegetables, meat, fish, poultry, dairy, and grains
- “Retailer”: must sell food for home preparation and consumption and meet at least one of these criteria: (A) offer for sale, on a continuous basis, at least three varieties of qualifying foods in each of the following four staple food groups, with perishable foods in at least two of the categories — meat, poultry or fish, bread or cereal, vegetables or fruits, and dairy products; OR (B) more than 50% of the total dollar amount of all retail sales (food, nonfood, gas and services) sold in the store must be from the sale of eligible staple foods.
- “Farmers’ Market”: two or more farmer-producers that sell their own agricultural products directly to the general public at a fixed location, which includes fruit and vegetables, meat, fish, poultry, dairy, and grains
- “Delivery Route”

No Current Partners Using: “Nonprofit Food Buying Cooperative”



Rules on SNAP and CSA *(section 4012 of the 2014 Farm Bill)*

- Payment for CSA boxes purchases with SNAP may be accepted no more than 14 days in advance of delivery/availability of the food
- If a customer is unable to pick up or receive a CSA box already paid for with SNAP, that person is entitled to a full refund of their SNAP benefits
- SNAP benefits may not be used to pay any administrative or membership fees associated with operating a CSA

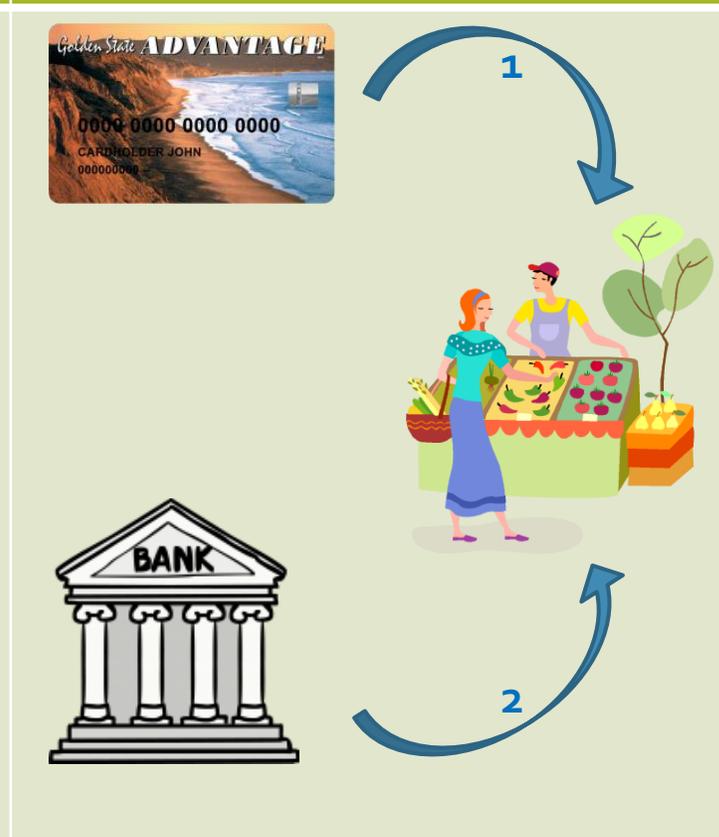


Models for Accepting CalFresh

Model 1 – Farmers' Market Licensed (scrip used)



Model 2 – Direct Market Farmer Licensed/CSA (no scrip used)



Model 3 – Faith Group Licensed (no scrip used)



Highlight: Catholic Charities

- Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Santa Rosa, faith-based non-profit organization that serves people of all faiths in six counties
- Started with CSA serving 8 employees
- Expanded to serve 20 low-income families already receiving services from CCSR
- Singing Frogs Farm



Implementation Challenges

- SNAP is generally supposed to be redeemed when people receive their food, CSA's typically pay in advance
- CSA box delivered, recipient shows, but "forgot their card"
- If customer uses a voucher, licensee is supposed to verify funds in ADVANCE, then "clear" it ASAP. Otherwise customer may use their SNAP dollars before Voucher is cleared
- Difficult for a farmer to redeem EBT at more than one CSA drop site; this makes it difficult to operate and scale incentive program
- Only one EBT machine allowed per farm (free machine from state, farms often can't afford to buy additional machines)
- Produce stand licensing issues thorny, required time and sophistication from applicants
- Bureaucracy (specifically invoicing regularly with back-up) needed to manage incentives is difficult for faith-based partners with limited capacity and some farmer partners. Resulted in challenges with turnover, training etc.
- Don't have access to government data on redemption, only second hand through 'batch reports'

Conclusion: Many variables impact degree of success at a site, difficult to point to 'silver bullet' fix

How Did Interfaith Food & Partners Respond?

- Move from “cover 50% of box price” to “Buy 2, Get 2 Free”
(CSA customers do one card swipe for first 2 weeks; incentive covers week 1 and 2)
- Vouchers used by some farmers
(USDA can see this as ‘backward’ because long before SNAP, “Food Stamp” program started w/EBT in 1990’s)
- Secured funds to pay for some staffing of produce stand sites
- Trained 19 farmers on how to get FNS license and free EBT machine from state
- Increased amount of match per transaction, per week for farm stand and mobile market partner sites that wanted to
- Worked with intermediaries with: Higher capacity; and more familiarity or ‘buy-in’ with nutrition incentive programming

Farmer Perspective

- **Joey Smith, Let's Go Farm**

- "Signing up for the SNAP machine was one of those things on my 'to do' list for years...I'm so glad I did and had the guidance from ISFC, because it is rather bureaucratic. Totally worth to be able to expand access to low income people, because our food should not be available only to those with lots of money"

- **From FINI evaluation (anonymous):**

- "At the end of the day, we need to make money, and it did that for us"
- [non-EBT customers] loved hearing what we are doing to help low-income people have access to healthy food"
- They [faith-based partner] housed the EBT machine and completely managed it. They also called customers every week and let me know how many boxes to bring every week. I wouldn't be able to do it otherwise. If I have to carry around an EBT machine, it would not work."



Adding Incentive on to EBT Card.

Pros and Concerns

Why it matters:

If easier to administer incentives, more farmers participate, more low-income Californians have affordable access to fresh produce.

Why Helpful for Working with Direct Market Farmers and Intermediary Partners:

- Farmers more motivated if reimbursed immediately
- Eliminates timely 'transaction costs' due to processing and confirming 'card swipes'
- Could lessen administrative burden of current reimbursement model
- Farmers' bottom line increases

Concerns:

1. Once the incentive is offered does it get used to: support purchases other than produce? businesses other than family farms?
2. How can incentives be verified to be used for intended purchases? Needed for financial internal controls & audits.
3. Will funders halt support in face of these concerns?

Where do we go from here?

- Additional high-capacity partners: additional farm partners
- Add incentive for farm direct eggs/meat etc. other than fruits and vegetables
- Seek funding to provide machines to farmers so they can serve multiple sites without depending on vouchers
- CSA On-line EBT redemption (Wa. State model)
- Encourage federal policy change for on-line redemption for CSA's
- Encourage California to get waiver from Feds like Massachusetts did

Nutrition Incentives Beyond CalFresh

- Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program incentives:

Senior Farmers Market Bonus Bucks

- Integrating Farmers Market Tours in Increase Participation

Growing Edge:

Add counties,

Add WIC FMNP incentive

Incentives on home delivered fresh produce



Thank you!

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